

Hem that ben vilayns of emprise.  
But undirstonde in thyntent,  
That this is not myn entement,  
To clepe no wight in no ages  
Only gentil for his linages.  
But whoso that is vertuous,  
And in his port nought outrageous,  
Whan sich oon thou seest thee biforn,  
Though he be not gentil born,  
Thou mayst wel seyn, this is a soth,  
That he is gentil, because he doth  
As longeth to a gentelman;  
Of hem non other deme I can.  
for certeynly, withouten drede,  
A cherl is demed by his dede,  
Of hys or lowe, as ye may see,  
Or of what kinrede that he be.  
Ne say nought, for noon yvel wille,  
Thing that is to holden stille;  
It is no worship to misseye.  
Thou mayst ensample take of Keye,  
That was somtyme, for misseying,  
Hated both of olde and ying;  
As feras Gaweyn, the worthy,  
Was preyed for his curtesy,  
Keye was hated, for he was fel,  
Of word disputous and cruel.  
Wherfore be wyse and aqueyntable,  
Goodly of word, and resonable  
Bothe to lesse and eek to mar.  
And whan thou comest ther men ar,  
Loke that thou have in custom ay  
first to salue hem, if thou may:  
And if it falle, that of hem som  
Salue thee first, be not dom,  
But quyte him curteisly anon  
Without abiding, er they goon.  
**Q**OR nothing eek thy tunge applye  
To speke wordis of ribaudye.  
To vilayn speche in no degree  
Lat never thy lippe unbounden be.  
for I nought holde him, in good feith,  
Curteys, that foule wordis seith.  
And alle wimmen serve and preyse,  
And to thy power hir honour reyse.  
And if that any missayere  
Dispyse wimmen, that thou mayst here,  
Blame him, and bidde him holde him stille.  
And set thy might and al thy wille  
Wimmen and ladies for to please,  
And to do thing that may hem ese,  
That they ever speke good of thee,  
for so thou mayst best preyed be.  
**O**KE fro pryde thou kepe thee wele;  
for thou mayst bothe perceyve and fele,  
That pryde is bothe foly and sinne;  
And he that pryde hath, him withinne,  
Ne may his herte, in no wyse,  
Meken ne souplen to servyse.  
for pryde is founde, in every part,  
Contrarie unto Loves art.  
And he that loveth trewely  
Shulde him contene jolily,

Withouten pryde in sondry wyse,  
And him disgyssen in queyntyse,  
for queynt array, withouten drede,  
Is nothing proud, who takith hede;  
for fresh array, as men may see,  
Withouten pryde may of te be.  
**M**YNTENE thysilf aftir thy rent,  
Of robe and eek of garnement;  
for many sythe fair clothing  
A man amendith in mich thing.  
And loke alwey that they be shape,  
What garnement that thou shalt make,  
Of him that can hem beste do,  
With al that perteyneth therto.  
Doynthis and sleeves be wel sittand,  
Right and streight upon the hand.  
Of shoon and botes, newe and faire,  
Loke at the leest thou have a paire;  
And that they sitte so fetisly,  
That these rude may uttirly  
Merveye, sith that they sitte so pleyne,  
How they come on or of ageyn.  
Were streite gloves, with aumenere  
Of silk; and alwey with good chere  
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse;  
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.  
Alwey be mery, if thou may,  
But waste not thy good alway.  
Have hat of floures fresh as May,  
Chapelet of roses of Whitsunday;  
for sich aray ne cost but lyte.  
Thyn hondis wasshe, thy teeth make whyte,  
And let no fithe upon thee be.  
Thy nailes blak if thou mayst see,  
Voide it away deliverly,  
And kembe thyn heed right jolily,  
fard not thy visage in no wyse,  
for that of love is not thempryse;  
for love doth haten, as I finde,  
A beaute that cometh not of kinde.  
**M**EY in herte I rede thee  
Glad and mery for to be,  
And be as joyful as thou can;  
Love hath no joye of sorowful man.  
That yvel is ful of curtesye  
That laubwith in his maladye;  
for ever of love the siknesse  
Is meynd with swete and bitternesse.  
The sore of love is merveilous;  
for now the lover is joyous,  
Now can he pleyne, now can he grone,  
Now can he singen, now maken mone.  
To day he pleyne for hevinesse,  
To morowe he pleyeth for jolynesse.  
The lyf of love is ful contrarie,  
Which stoundemele can ofte varie.  
But if thou canst som mirthis make,  
That men in gree wole gladly take,  
Do it goodly, I comaunde thee;  
for men sholde, whersoever they be,  
Do thing that hem best sitting is,  
for therof cometh good loos and pris.  
Wherof that thou be vertuous,

Ne be not straunge ne dangerous.  
**O**R if that thou good rider be,  
Drike gladly, that men may se.  
In armes also if thou conne,  
Pursue, til thou a name hast wonne.  
**A**ND if thy voice be fair and clere,  
Thou shalt maken no gret daungere  
Whan to singe they goodly preye;  
It is thy worship for to obeye.  
Also to you it longith ay  
To harpe and giterne, daunce and play;  
for if he can wel foote and daunce,  
It may him greetly do avaunce.  
Among eek, for thy lady sake,  
Songes and complayntes that thou make;  
for that wol meve hem in hir herte,  
Whan they reden of thy smerte.  
**O**KE that no man for scarce thee holde,  
For that may greve thee manyfolde.  
Resoun wol that a lover be  
In his yiftes more large and free  
Than cherles that been not of loving.  
for who therof can any thing,  
He shal be leef ay for to yeve,  
In Loves lore who so wolde leve;  
for he that, through a godeyn sight,  
Or for a kissing, anonright  
Yaf hool his herte in wille and thought,  
And to himsilf kepith right nought,  
Aftir swich yift, is good resoun,  
He yeve his good in abandoun.  
**O**W wol I shortly here rehere,  
Of that that I have seid in verse,  
At the sentence by and by,  
In wordis fewe compendiously,  
That thou the bet mayst on hem  
thinke,  
Whether so it be thou wake or winke;  
for that the wordis litel greve  
A man to kepe, whanne it is breve.  
**W**HOSO with Love wol goon or ryde  
He mot be curteys, and void of pryde,  
Mery and fulle of jolite,  
And of largesse alosed be.  
**F**IRST I joyne thee, here in penaunce,  
That ever, withoute repentaunce,  
Thou set thy thought in thy loving,  
To laste withoute repenting;  
And thenke upon thy mirthis swete,  
That shal folowe aftir whan ye mete.  
**A**ND for thou trewe to love shalt be,  
I wol, and eek comaunde thee,  
That in oo place thou sette, al hool,  
Thyn herte, withouten halfen dool,  
for trecherie, in sikernesse;  
for I lovede never doubtenesse.  
To many his herte that wol depart,  
Everiche shal have but litel part.  
But of him drede I me right nought,  
That in oo place settith his thought.  
Therfore in oo place it sette,  
And lat it never thennes flette.  
for if thou yevest it in lening,

I holde it but a wrecchid thing;  
Therfore yeve it hool and quyte,  
And thou shalt have the more merite.  
If it be lent, than aftir soon,  
The bountee and the thank is doon;  
But, in love, free yeven thing  
Requyrit a gret guerdoning.  
Yeve it in yift al quit fully,  
And make thy yift debonairly;  
for men that yift wol holde more dere  
That yeven is with gladsome chere.  
That yift nought to preisen is  
That man yeveth, maugre his.  
Whan thou hast yeven thyn herte, as I  
have seid thee here al openly,  
Chan adventures shulle thee falle,  
Which harde and hevy been withalle.  
for ofte whan thou bithenkest thee  
Of thy loving, wherso thou be,  
fro folk thou must depart in hy,  
That noon perceyve thy malady,  
But hyde thyn harm thou must alone,  
And go forth sole, and make thy mone.  
Thou shalt no whyl be in oo stat,  
But whylom cold and whylom hat;  
Now reed as rose, now yelow and fade.  
Such sorowe, I trowe, thou never hade;  
Cotidian, ne yit quarteyne,  
It is nat so ful of peyne.  
for ofte tymes it shal falle  
In love, among thy peynes alle,  
That thou thyself, al hoolly,  
for yeten shalt so utterly,  
That many tymes thou shalt be  
Stille as an image of tree,  
Dom as a stoon, without stering  
Of foot or hond, without speking.  
Chan, sone after al thy peyne,  
To memorie shalt thou come ageyn,  
As man abashed wondre sore,  
And after sighen more and more,  
for wit thou wel, withouten wene,  
In swich astat ful oft have been  
That have the yvel of love assayd,  
Wherthrough thou art so dismayd.  
**A**FTER, a thought shal take thee so,  
That thy love is to fer thee fro:  
Thou shalt say: God, what may this be,  
That I ne may my lady see?  
Myne herte aloos is to her go,  
And I abyde al sole in wo,  
Departed fro myn owne thought,  
And with myne eyen see right nought.  
Alas, myn eyen sende I ne may,  
My careful herte to convayl  
Myn hertes gyde but they be,  
I praise nothing whatever they see.  
Shul they abyde thanne? nay;  
But goon visyte without delay  
That myn herte desyret so.  
for certeynly, but if they go,  
A fool myself I may wel holde,  
Whan I ne see what myn herte wolde.